



CITY OF HOUSTON

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Mayor

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March 30, 2021

The Honorable Joe Deshotel
Chairman, House Committee on Land & Resource Management
Texas House
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Chairman Deshotel,

My name is Margaret Wallace Brown and I am the Director of the Planning and Development Department for the City of Houston. I'm here today to express my support for this bill.

Houston's economic success can be attributed to, in part, Houstonians choosing not to adopt citywide land use regulations. But even so, like Texans in cities of all sizes, we are proud of our history and seek to preserve it.

Preservation of historic structures serves both community character and economic development purposes. HB 1200 gives cities clarity to property owners that they may preserve their community, their culture, their history, without overregulation.

The City of Houston passed its first historic preservation related ordinance in 1984 with the creation of the Houston Archeological and Historical Commission. Since then we established the historic preservation program to protect and preserve historic resources across the city. This is not a top-down program. Houston's historic program requires a super-majority of 67% of property owners agreeing to be in any proposed district for the district to be created. To date, property owners have asked the city to establish 22 historic districts and designate over 500 individual landmarks. There are now a total of 7,164 historic properties protected by this program, yet this includes .4% of the City's land area.

Our program allows property owners to protect their largest investment and has increased property values in those districts. According to data provided by the Houston Association of Realtors, sale prices in historic districts exceed those in the areas immediately surrounding them. The positive economic impact to the city cannot be denied.

Passage of HB 1200 supports Houston's preservation program that allows the city to support property owners' requests to regulate changes without over-regulation. We ask you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Margaret Wallace Brown

